



Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich  
Environments (LITTLE) Grant  
Family Child Care Learning Homes  
Operating Guidelines  
2021-2022

## INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the requirements and regulations for operating a Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) grant. To ensure program compliance and quality service, all LITTLE grant providers must be familiar with and implement these guidelines. This document is intended to provide clarity and to offer guidance to LITTLE grant providers. Bright from the Start makes all funding decisions for the LITTLE grants. Infant Toddler Specialists make site visits throughout the grant period to review compliance and provide support. Providers who do not comply with the LITTLE Guidelines may have the existing grant agreement terminated and will not be eligible for the grants in the future.

## **1.0 General Program Information**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) grants is to support the language and literacy skills of infants and toddlers by increasing provider confidence and competence in using responsive caregiving practices as a tool to build literacy skills and to increase skills in providing positive, responsive, and high-quality environments for infants and toddlers.

### **1.2 Program Responsibilities**

Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) receiving a LITTLE Grant will:

- participate in on-going professional development and coaching by a DECAL Infant Toddler Language and Literacy Specialist;
- participate in all evaluation measures, including but not limited to, the use of LENA devices; and
- maintain or increase their current Quality Rated star rating.

## **2.0 Professional Development**

### **2.1 Required Professional Development Opportunities**

All providers participating in grant activities must attend required professional development opportunities as listed below.

- Early Language and Literacy Institutes
  - Frequency: 4 sessions over 6 months
  - Location: Virtual
  - Conducted by DECAL staff and invited presenters
- Coaching sessions
  - Frequency: Weekly
  - Location: Virtual or face to face, when possible
  - Conducted by DECAL Infant Toddler Specialists

### **2.2 Professional Development System**

Providers must be enrolled in the Georgia Professional Development System (PDS). PDS combines education, experience and training and assigns all registrants a Career Level. Supporting documentation must be submitted to confirm educational attainment and training. Supporting documents include official transcripts, training certificates, copies of CDA (Child Development Associate) and technical college credentials. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) reviews transcripts and credentials for the PDS to verify an individual provider's credentials and degrees. Providers should confirm that they have registered in the PDS, submitted required documentation to the PDS, and that the PDS has verified the credential. Failure to have credentials current and verified in the PDS may affect grant payments.

### **2.3 Registration for Professional Development Opportunities**

Registration for Early Language and Literacy Institutes will be done through the PDS. The provider is responsible for being aware of all professional development and training information and providing his/her PDS number to DECAL. For help with professional development needs, LITTLE grant providers should contact their assigned Infant Toddler Specialist or [infanttoddler@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:infanttoddler@dec.al.ga.gov)

#### 2.4 Stipends for Attending Professional Development Sessions

Stipends will be paid for providers participating in professional development. Stipends will be paid, as a lump sum after the final institute, as follows:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Eligible for Stipends</u>	<u>Stipend</u>	<u>Total</u>
Early Language and Literacy Institutes	FCCLH Providers	\$125 per Institute x 4	\$500

### **3.0 Funding**

Funds available for approved grant activities will be managed by Communities for Children, Inc. Communities for Children, Inc., will process material and technology orders and stipend payments. Communities for Children, Inc., will also verify receipt of materials packages by programs. Grant participants will receive no direct funds.

#### 3.1 Classroom Materials

A language and literacy materials package valued at up to \$1000 will be chosen by the provider from an approved selection of materials. Infant Toddler Specialists will work with programs to conduct a materials inventory and identify appropriate packages to order. Programs must submit packing slips or other evidence to Communities for Children, Inc. to document receipt by the program.

#### 3.2 Professional Learning Stipends and Support

Stipends to support participation at trainings will be paid as follows: \$125 per provider participating in the Early Language and Literacy Institutes. Stipends will be paid as a lump-sum upon completion of the entire 4-part institute series with proper verification of attendance and completion.

#### 3.3 Equipment

A technology package valued at up to \$600 will be provided to support participation in virtual coaching sessions and trainings. Programs must submit to Communities for Children, Inc. a packing slip or other evidence that the equipment was received by the program. Providers that have already received a technology package as part of another grant will not be eligible for an additional package.

### **4.0 Data Collection and Evaluation Activities**

All grantees must participate in activities designed to evaluate program effectiveness. Participation in these activities includes completion of surveys and interviews and the use of the LENA device.